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ABSTRACT

Processes by which teachers may identify behavioral objectives for their students and bring about changes in attitudes and values are examined. An example is presented of the general affective goals of helping students to develop positive self-concepts, appreciate the dignity and worth of others, and value democratic attitudes. It is pointed out that such general objectives should be reduced to specific affective objectives before they can become objects of instruction. The process of examining the characteristics and actions of individuals who possess the desired attitudes and values is described. The teachers' task of designing learning experiences for the attainment and reinforcement of those specified behaviors in students is noted. A discussion is offered on ways in which teachers can evaluate the progress of their students in achieving the selected affective goals. (JD)

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IMPLEMENTING AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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In spite of the importance attached to affective objectives by most educators, they have not had an appreciable impact on educational practice. Affective objectives remain largely ornamental. They decorate the statements of philosophy and purposes of course outlines, textbooks and other curriculum materials. An examination of the instructional process, however, reveals an erosion of affective objectives. They are prominent during the initial stage of curriculum planning, but few learning experiences are designed to lead to their attainment.

Affective objectives tend to erode because they are usually constructed only at the general level, and educators intuitively recognize that general objectives cannot be attained directly. They are aware that goals such as an appreciation of learning and attitudes of respect for self and others cannot be conveyed directly. The results has been that educators have tended to focus their attention primarily on the attainment of cognitive and psychomotor objectives, leaving their affective objectives to erode.

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Making Affective Objectives Attainable

The attainment of affective objectives depends upon the utilization of an approach to instruction similar to that proposed by Tyler. Tyler suggested that systematic instruction requires a process that involves:

1. Determining what changes in students' behavior to try to bring about,
2. Determining what content and learning experiences can be used to bring about these ends,
3. Determining an effective organization of these learning experiences so that their cumulative effect will bring about the desired behavior change, and
4. Appraising the effects of the learning experiences to find out in what ways they have been effective and in what respects they have not produced the desired results.

A method of incorporating affective objectives into a similar model is presented below.

The Broad General Affective Objectives

Affective instruction must necessarily begin with the specification of the general affective objectives in instruction. Specifying the general affective objectives is usually not a problem because educators are good at stating general goals. Affective instruction usually breaks down at this point, however, because these general affective objectives cannot be attained directly. For example, general affective goals like the following:

1. The student will develop a positive self-concept,

2. The student will appreciate the dignity and worth of others, and

3. The student will value democratic attitudes and values,

cannot be taught directly in a manner that will lead to the attainment of the objectives. It is possible to teach "about" the above. However, the objective is that the students develop positive self-concepts, an appreciation of the dignity and worth of others, and come to value democratic attitudes and values. This is quite different from "learning about" them.

Reducing General Affective Objectives

The general affective objectives must be reduced to specific affective objectives before they can become objects of instruction. However, once the general objectives are reduced to specific objectives, learning experiences can be designed to lead to the attainment of the objectives, and the outcomes of instruction can be evaluated.

The reduction of general affective objectives to specific affective objectives involves the process of going from general to specific rather than the process of going from specific to general. Unfortunately, from the point of view of attaining affective objectives, we are much better at going from specific to general than we are at going in the opposite direction. We are normally very good at observing specific behaviors and assigning a general label to the person performing the behaviors. For example, when we observe Mary making deprecating remarks

about herself or failing to stand up for herself, we have little difficulty in determining that she has a poor self-concept. The process of reducing general affective objectives to specific affective objectives, however, requires that - given the general characteristic or label we are able to derive the specific behaviors that are indictive of individuals with that general characteristic. The assumption made in using the model is that the additive results of the attainment of the specific affective objectives is progress toward the attainment of the general objective. For example, if we can decrease the frequency of behaviors that led us to infer that Mary had a poor self-concept (making deprecating remarks about herself, and failing to stand up for herself) we are justified in inferring that progress is being made toward the attainment of the general objective. Then if in addition we can 1) increase the frequency with which Mary comments positively about herself and 2) pushes her own point of view, people will be unlikely to infer that she has a poor self-concept in the future.

The process of reducing general affective objectives to specific objectives begins by asking the question:

> What kinds of things do people do who have the general characteristic that others do not do?

The answer to this question provides a tentative list of behaviors that are thought to provide evidence that the broad general affective objective is being attained. For example,

if the general affective objective that has been established is that:

The students will appreciate the dignity and worth of others, then the question asked to derive a tentative list of specific behaviors related to the attainment of the general objective is:

> What kinds of things do people do, who appreciate the dignity and worth of others, that others do not do?

The answer to the question leads to a list of specific behaviors that the people involved feel are directly related to the attainment of the general objective. Such a list of examples is included below:

1. Seek peer approval for social isolates in the class,
2. Defend others against aggression,
3. Defend the right of others to be different,
4. Help others,
5. Acknowledge the accomplishments of others,
6. Care for the property of others, and
7. Associate with individuals from different ethnic, racial, social, and religious groups.

The behaviors that are included on the initial list need to be checked to determine the degree to which the behaviors provide good evidence that the general objective is being attained. Many of the behaviors that are suggested may be desirable behaviors, but not be directly related to the general objective in question.

The behaviors that provide the best evidence of the attainment of the general affective object are behaviors that are performed by individuals who have the characteristic, but are not performed by individuals who do not have the characteristic.

To determine if the behaviors suggested above provide good evidence of the attainment of the general objective involving an appreciation of the dignity and worth of others, two questions are asked of each suggested behavior. For example:

1. Are people, who appreciate the dignity and worth of others, more likely to seek peer approval for social isolates than someone who does not?

2. Are people, who do not appreciate the dignity and worth of others, also likely to seek peer approval for social isolates?

If the behavior suggested provides good evidence of the attainment of the general objective the answer to the first question should be, "Yes," and the answer to the second question should be "No." In this example the answers to the two questions appear to be "Yes" and "No" respectively. The behavior of seeking approval for the social isolates in the group appears to provide good evidence that the general affective objective, "Students will appreciate the dignity and worth of others," is being attained. When the second suggested behavior, defend others against aggression, is incorporated into the two questions different results are attained. The answer to the questions:

1. Are people, who appreciate the dignity and worth of others, more likely to defend others against aggression than people who do not?

2. Are people, who do not appreciate the dignity and worth of others, also likely to defend others against aggression?

tend to be "Yes" and "Yes." The behavior fails to satisfy the criterion posed by the second question. This is because people who do not appreciate the dignity and worth of others will also defend others against aggression. Gang members defend gang members when they are attacked. The suggested behavior could be altered so that it would pass the test posed by the second question if the behavior was stated, "Defend all others against aggression." When the behavior is stated in this way, most people appear willing to accept it as evidence of an appreciation of the dignity and worth of others.

Complete agreement about the behaviors that constitute evidence of the attainment of a general objective is not always possible. The disagreement stems from the arbitrary nature of the general concepts and from the nature of "more likely" in the test questions. Nevertheless, the process typically yields lists of behaviors that thoughtful educators will accept as evidence that students are making progress toward the attainment of the general affective objective.

Developing Specific Affective Objectives

The behaviors that are derived from breaking down the broad general objectives can then be used to develop specific affective objectives.

Specific affective objectives are concerned primarily with increasing (or decreasing) the frequency or duration of voluntary behaviors that are already in the repetoire of the students. For this reason the emphasis in the objectives is on, "will do," rather than "can do." The objectives necessarily involve the assumption that the students have the ability to perform the behaviors. If the students do not know how to perform the behaviors the behaviors should be incorporated into specific behavioral objectives in the cognitive or psychomotor domain, and the student taught how to perform the behavior. Typically, however, the behaviors that are included in the specific affective objectives are behaviors that the students have the capability of performing, but are not performing with the frequency or duration desired.

The specific affective objectives are in other ways similar to the specific objectives in the other domains. The action in the objectives must be observable, and the behavior to be increased (or decreased) must be specific enough so that there is little question regarding the behaviors involved.

There is always a question regarding how specific the objective must be. It is possible to further reduce almost any objective, so the question becomes, "How specific should a specific objective be?" From the classroom teacher's point of view, the objectives should be specific enough so that they can function as a guideline for action. The objectives should be specific enough so the teacher can 1) use the objective as

a basis for planning learning experiences to strengthen (or weaken) the indicated class of behaviors, and 2) react to the spontaneous classroom events in a manner consistent with the attainment of the objective. There are many ways that students can seek approval for isolates or defend others' right to be different. However, the behaviors are specific enough so that teachers usually have little trouble identifying them, and can both contrive classroom conditions to lead to the attainment of the objectives and react to spontaneous classroom occurrences in a manner consistent with the attainment of the objective.

The Learning Experience

In general, efficient attainment of educational objectives requires that the type of educational objective be matched to the type of learning appropriate for the attainment of that type of objective. The specific affective objectives suggested here generally involve the strengthening of voluntary behaviors already in the repetoire of the student. The type of learning that is concerned with the strengthening (or weakening) of voluntary behaviors is operant learning. A detailed discussion of operant learning is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say, however, that the task of the teacher in designing learning experiences for the attainment of the specific affective objectives is to find ways of reinforcing on an appropriate schedule the desired behaviors specified in the objective.

The nature of operant learning makes allowing affective objectives to erode a serious problem. This is because in a larger sense they do not erode. Behaviors that are directly related to the affective objectives educators value so highly do not remain unchanged. Everything that educators, school peers, and others do or fail to do following the performance of a related behavior is likely to effect the attainment of the objective in one way or another. The problem occurs because if educators do not focus their attention directly on the attainment of their affective objectives many incidental learning experiences are likely to occur which result in the strengthening of undesired behaviors and the elimination of desired behaviors. Teachers can choose not to teach certain cognitive and psychomotor behaviors, and as a result have them remain relatively unchanged. However, behaviors which are consistent and inconsistent with the attainment of general affective objectives occur with or without teacher planning, and if the events that follow the behaviors are not controlled desired behaviors are likely to be weakened and undesired behaviors strengthened.

Evaluating the Attainment of the Objectives

The evaluation of the attainment of the specific affective objectives does two things for the teacher. First, it allows teachers to judge the effectiveness of their learning experiences; and second, the feedback that teachers acquire as the result of the evaluation provides reinforcement teachers need to keep their positive approaches going.

Teachers must be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning experiences they provide if they are to be successful in attaining their objectives. Without feedback regarding the changes that are or are not occurring in student behavior, teachers have no basis on which to evaluate the learning experiences they devise for their students.

The data the teacher gets back as a result of evaluating the attainment of their objectives tend to be reinforcing for the teacher. Teachers need reinforcement too, and the primary source of reinforcement for them comes from being able to see that they are making progress toward attaining their objectives. This feedback provides them with a feeling of accomplishment and encourages them to go on and continue to improve the learning experiences.

In practice, data are gathered before instruction begins concerning the existing frequency or duration of the desired behaviors. Post intervention data are collected and compared with the base rate to determine if changes have occurred; that is, to determine if the specific affective objectives have been attained. If the students have made progress in attaining the specific affective objectives, then it is appropriate to infer progress towards attainment of the general affective objectives from which the specific were derived.

A final word. A technology does exist for conceptualizing and implementing affective objectives. Helping students to grow and mature in affective ways can become a practical reality if curriculum workers, teachers and administrators apply the science of behavior to the task.